

The Historical Society of St. Catharines **NEWSLETTER**

December 2005

P.O. Box 23104, 124 Welland Ave., St. Catharines, ON, L2R 7P6

Web Site - <http://www.niagara.com/~dmdorey/hssc/hssc.html>

Founded in 1927. Our Society is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society.
Our Mission and Goal is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the history of St. Catharines and vicinity.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Upcoming Speakers Program

All programs start at 7:30 p.m. at the St. Catharines Museum

January 26 – Maurice Gomme: “Street Names of St. Catharines”

February 23 – Brenda Zadoroznij: “History along the Bruce Trail”

March 23 – Alun Hughes: “Too Many Catha/erines - the Founding and Naming of the Garden City”

April 27 – Hannelore Headley: “A Half Century of Bibliophile Pleasures”

May 25 – Michael Peterman, Trent University: “James McCarroll”

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Membership is for the calendar year. Individual \$10.00, Family \$15.00.

The Society does not share our membership list.

Please make your cheque payable to: **The Historical Society of St. Catharines**

Please Remit to: The Historical Society of St. Catharines

P. O. Box 23104, 124 Welland Avenue

St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 7P6

Remove and return with your cheque ... thank you for your renewal!

Membership Renewal - Individual _____ or Family _____

Names(s) - _____

Address - _____

Telephone #- (905) _____

E-mail address - _____

Speaker or Activity Suggestions: _____

Would you be interested in a weekend long bus tour? _____

Condolences

Phyllis Hill passed away on Saturday, September 17, 2005 in Welland. Phyllis, a member of our Society for a number of years, was also President of the Niagara Regional Historical Council. Phyllis was instrumental in the creation of the Welland Historical Museum when it started in the former orphanage on South Pelham Road. She worked hard in getting the museum established while collecting artefacts, including furniture that she had stored in the Welland jail until the building was ready.

Walter Biehn passed away September 30. Walter had recently moved to Midhurst, Ontario.

The Society sends condolences to member Brian Narhi on the passing of his mother Rachel Narhi on September 18.

New Members

Barbara Schilz, Mark Dobell, Linda Dennison

2005 Trillium Award Winners

Congratulations to Society Members who won awards in the Heritage Awards Category - Award of Merit: Lou Cahill; Chair's Discretionary Award: Norman Macdonald

September Program Report

Thirty seven people attended a very informative presentation by Mark Dobell on public transportation in the City of St. Catharines. Well researched and factual, Mark took us back to the days of the forerunner of the St. Catharines Transit Commission and of the trolley, to Lakeside Park, to the old bus terminals and then to the creation of the current Commission itself and the many changes that have taken place over the years. Mark's enthusiasm was evident and his love of his employment with the Commission certainly came across to the audience. Mark finished the presentation with some great photos and then answered several questions from the floor. Paul Lewis introduced the speaker, while Bill Stevens thanked him and presented an honorarium and a Society membership.

Doors Open Niagara

With more sites and cross-border participation, this year's Doors Open, held October 15 and 16, was definitely a success. Many Society members participated by attending or visiting sites and from all accounts enjoyed the weekend. This was a fabulous idea that began in Niagara only four years ago and has become a great way to promote our heritage. The Society would particularly like to thank Alex Ormston and Ivy Stevens for manning the Society table at Mayholme, and Mayholme for providing us with the opportunity to promote the Society.

Congratulations to Sports Hall of Famers

The Society extends congratulations to Bob Luey, Jimmy Joy, Terry O'Malley, Doug Robinson and Al McDonough on being elected to the St. Catharines Sports Hall of Fame. Portraits and write-ups on members of the hall can be found inside the gallery of the St. Catharines Museum.

Newsletter Notes

The Historical Society of St. Catharines Newsletter is published up to 4 times per year by the Society. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform the membership of issues pertaining to the Society and items of historical interest. Comments and queries should be directed to the Society postal address. Opinions and comments expressed in the newsletter are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Society. Subscription by paid membership only. Bill Stevens produced this issue.

The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Ministry of Culture.

Next Issue - March 2006

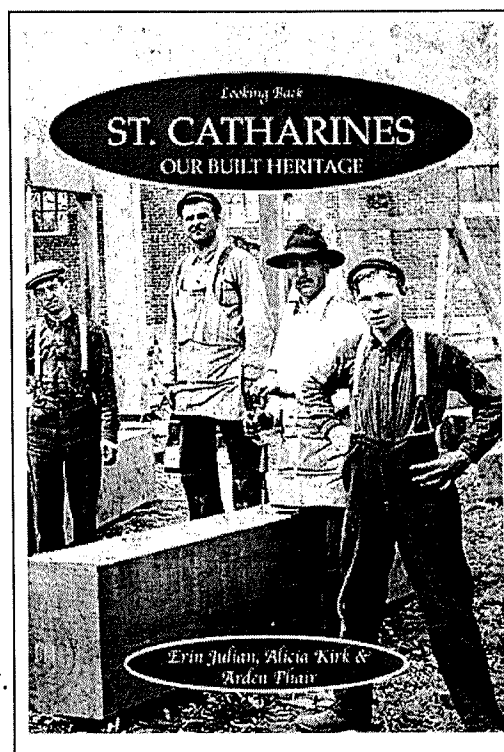
Contributions of content always appreciated!

New Museum Publication:

St. Catharines: Our Built Heritage

- focuses on the rich architectural heritage of St. Catharines over the 165 years between 1830 and 1995. Past and present commercial, residential, religious, educational, transportation, and public buildings are highlighted in this overview of our built heritage.

In addition to the historical details of each structure, stories of their past make this an entertaining glimpse into the past. Drawn from the extensive photographic archives of the St. Catharines Museum, many of the 194 images have never been published. Some are printed directly from century-old glass-plate negatives. As Niagara's largest city, St. Catharines has been the commercial centre of the peninsula for almost two centuries. Its community pride was reflected in its buildings. Some of the greatest architects of the period applied their visions locally in brick and stone. If walls could talk, they'd tell the stories of celebrations, of an execution, of fires and warfare, and of people and places. We hope you enjoy this look back at our architectural legacy. The book, published in the "Looking Back" series by Vanwell Publications, was launched at the Friends Day" celebration at the St. Catharines Museum on November 20th. The book retails for \$22.95 and is available at the Museum gift shop.



History in *The Standard* Newspaper

* *The Standard* has been running a series of stories on interesting parks, bridges, buildings, monuments and statues around the Region, titled "Niagara Landmarks." If you have a suggestion for an interesting column, call 905-684-7251, ext. 249.

* Dennis Gannon's "Yesterday and Today" column is a very popular feature in Saturday's issue of *The Standard*. Dennis is always looking for that one picture you may have squirreled away in an old photo album that depicts a building that has changed over the years. Take a look through your albums and boxes and contact Dennis at <gannond2002@yahoo.com or let Bill Stevens know, you might just have a rare view that Dennis would love to use in one of his columns!

* "Search Engine" is another *Standard*, column which answers questions posed to staff. Many of the questions pertain to our collective past. A recent column attempted to answer the question: Where did St. Catharines get its name? ... not a simple question and one that Alun Hughes has been researching for some time now! Send your question to standard@stcatharinesstandard.ca under the subject: Search Engine.

Heritage Designation Ceremony

On Saturday, October 1st a Heritage Designation Ceremony was held at 108 Louisa Street. Congratulations to owners Heather Pratt and Larry Janzen who have lovingly restored this absolutely beautiful home. The house consists of the original one-storey brick block, nearly square in plan with a raised stone foundation, and a single storey rear addition built in 1872 by the original owner, William Henry Pay.

Web Site of the Issue!

There is a new web site dedicated to the history and memories of Port Dalhousie that you will certainly want to visit: <http://www.portmemories.com> Just new, it is growing by leaps and bounds and I am told by the web site owner, Doug Mackie, that it now contains only a small fraction of the material that he plans to add, and is doing so on a regular basis. If you have any old pictures pertaining to Port Dalhousie, consider allowing Doug to place them on the web.

Wardens of Lincoln County from St. Catharines

- *1850 - Bernard FOLEY – Reeve of St. Catharines
- #1854 - Elias Smith ADAMS – Reeve of St. Catharines
- #1856 - George RYKERT - Reeve of St. Catharines
- @1856 - George RYKERT - Reeve of St. Catharines
- 1857 - James G. CURRIE – Deputy Reeve of St. Catharines
- 1858 - William McGIVERIN - Reeve of St. Catharines
- 1867 - J.C. RYKERT - Reeve of St. Catharines
- 1868 - J.C. RYKERT - Reeve of St. Catharines
- 1872 - James DOUGLAS – Deputy Reeve of St. Catharines
- 1874 - Calvin BROWN – Deputy Reeve of St. Catharines

* United Counties of Lincoln, Welland and Haldimand. Haldimand County separated 1851.

United Counties of Lincoln and Welland. Welland County separated in 1856.

@ Lincoln County only.

Looking For Royal Canadian Henley Regatta Souvenir Programs

Greg Smith at the downtown library is seeking Royal Canadian Henley Regatta souvenir programs. The library web site contains scanned programs from many years in the Henley Regatta database. The goal is to obtain a program from every year that one was published. The following years are being sought: 1905 to 1914, 1919, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1925, 1928, 1930 to 1934, 1939 to 1945, 1947, 1948, 1951, 1957, 1958, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1974, 1978, 1980 and 1981. If you have one, please e-mail Bill Stevens (bibmstev@computan.on.ca) or tel. 905-934-8966 to verify if it is still required and to arrange pickup or drop-off. As soon as they are scanned they will be returned.

Dedication Of Monument to James “Chief” SMILEY

On Saturday, August 20, at 11 a.m. in the St. Andrew’s Cemetery at the foot of Johnston Street, in Old Port Dalhousie, I was pleased to be able to join a small group of family and friends gathered to dedicate a monument to James “Chief” SMILEY. The monument was placed on the previously unmarked gravesite by grandson Wayne SMILEY of Brantingham, New York. The brownish granite monument reads “For My Grandfather” and a mounted photograph of the “Chief” in his gunslinger’s pose is prominent, followed with his name and birth date September 20, 1884 and death date, March 18, 1948, and the epitaph “The Hermit of Henley and Marksman Extraordinaire”.

The back of the monument bears the following inscription:

“My rule of life is to drink
and be merry. To be free
from belief and unbelief is
my religion. I asked the Bride
of Destiny her bride price,
“Your joyous heart,” she
said – *A passage from the
Chief’s beloved Ruba ‘iyat
of Omar Khayyam*”

The grave is in the SMILEY family plot fairly near the bank of Martindale Pond, a fitting place of rest. James “Chief” SMILEY died when his house located on the banks of the Henley course caught fire and he was unable to escape the inferno.



Photo by Bill Stevens

BIRDGENEAU CANOE LIVERY

BROCK STREET
CANOES AND ROWBOATS TO HIRE.
DAY, WEEK OR MONTH

REDUCED RATES
PHONE 58 - - PORT DALHOUSIE

The Austin House

16-18 LOCK STREET, PORT DALHOUSIE

Rooms, \$1.00 and up

Meals, 50c

A la Carte Service

PHONE 49

JAMES "CHIEF" SMILEY

HENLEY CANOE LIVERY

ANN STREET

PORT DALHOUSIE

Canoes and Rowboats to Hire.

Motor boat service to quiet waters on windy days. No extra charge. Phone 166w.

Best From The Past

The following is from an article that appeared in the Society's *February 1996 Newsletter* titled:

Black History in St. Catharines: What the Numbers Say

By Nancy Butler.

Nancy Butler co-authored a 1992-book *Slavery and Freedom in Niagara*.

I have recorded the statistics of those labelled mulatto, Negro and coloured in only the 1861 and 1871 St. Catharines census and in several years of assessment records between 1854 and 1862. ...

The records show that most lived in modest frame houses and "shanties". Pigs and cows were popular animals to own, although some people had horses, but usually as part of a business. Thomas Douglas, for example, possessed several horses, but he operated a stagecoach service. Nobody had a great wealth, no brick homes or private carriages, or at least they didn't tell the taxman about them!

In 1871 only 15 children were recorded as attending schools and only four in 1861. I think this is a result of sloppy reporting rather than actual fact. In any case, the school for "coloureds" must have had few students, especially considering that, in common with white children, most left at 15 to find work. Their parents, if born in the United States, were usually illiterate, which confirms that slaves were never taught to read and write. However, all those born in Upper Canada were literate, which shows that here, they did have access to schooling, even if segregated,

The principal occupation was that of labourer, most likely casual labourer. However, many were servants, working for wealthy households, widows or hotels. "Barber" was a popular occupation with at least six or seven practising at any one time. Aaron Young was a barber with his own place on Queenston in 1856 and on St. Paul Street in 1858. He later challenged the colour bar at the Stephenson Hotel, where he was working in 1867. I think he had a concession in the hotel but continued to operate on St. Paul Street.

In the 1861 census, John W. Lindsay was listed as a "labourer". However, in 1856 assessment record, he was listed as "gentleman". He did own three properties in St. Catharines in 1856 and 1861 and perhaps, being a landowner elevated him to a "gentleman" status. Or again it may have been somebody poking fun.

Many blacks operated businesses. Renix Johnston, Francis Scott and Nelson Williams were all shoemakers. There were 11 carpenters, 13 joiners, two chimney sweeps, eight masons, one watchmaker, Daniel Williams, and one jeweller, David T. Williamson, on St. Paul Street.

Many workers were associated with the spas. Thomas Douglas was a coach driver and James Wright, a bus driver. There were 15 waiters and four servants, all working in hotels. William Riley was the only porter, but I suspect that the "waiters" and "servants" may have doubled as porters.

The women usually were laundrists (four), dressmakers (two), cooks (one), hairdressers (two), and of course, servants. Married women as a rule did not list an occupation. I presume "homemaker" was not considered an occupation in those days!

There were a few ministers, or preachers. These men may have been lay ministers and had other work that supported them.

In 1871 three saloonkeepers were black: Charles Burns, George Page and Robert Young. I suspect they had tavern licences and had a bar in their homes. Charles Burns and Robert Young lived together in 1861, and Robert Young was a waiter. Then both he and Charles Burns become saloon keepers in 1871. I think they may have been friends and started the business together.

The most common addresses were on North and Geneva streets and Welland Avenue, near the two Black churches – the B.M.E. Church and Zion Baptist—that were both located on Geneva just south of Welland. Other Black residents were scattered on Academy, Cherry, Church, King, Lake, Niagara, Ontario, Queen, Queenston, Somerset, St. Paul, Water, William and Yates streets. Of course, a very few lived on other streets. Most of these were servants, with few exceptions. John Hamshire, a carpenter, probably worked in the shipyards, and lived nearby, on Hainer Street in west St. Catharines.

J.P. Merritt and W.H. Merritt were the prime property landlords--- especially in the North Street neighbourhood. Others were Robert Leper, Rufus Wright and Daniel McGuire. As noted above, one landowner was black—John Lindsay.

I also read *The Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada* by Benjamin Drew, published in Boston in 1856. It contained the first-person accounts of the flights to freedom of several St. Catharines residents: James Adams, William Johnson, the Rev. Alexander Helmsmen, Dan Josiah Lockhart, John W. Lindsey, William Gorse and David West.

Continues on page 7...

I was able to follow some of their stories in the St. Catharines records. James Adams rented a house on North St. from Merritt. Born in 1808, he married Jane, and was labourer. William Johnson, also a labourer and married to Martha, lived on North Street. Elizabeth Helmsmen, who took in laundry, might have been the widow of the Rev. Helmsmen. Dan Josiah Lockhart, another labourer, rented a place on North Street owned by William Merritt. Born in 1812, he was married to Laura. John Lindsey (or Lindsay), born in 1806, and his wife, Harriet, had a large family according to the 1861 census. His land holdings are mentioned above. William Grose or Gross, born in 1839, worked as a waiter and servant and rented on William Street from Daniel McGuire. Finally, David West became a joiner and rented a house on Geneva Street from Joseph Wilkins. It appeared that few owned property, most worked as labourers and all married (or were already married to) women who had also escaped from slavery.

One slave, who ended his life in St. Catharines, was the Rev. Anthony Burns. I have not been able to find any documentation on him in the records in St. Catharines other than those relating to his death and burial, but I have unearthed some contemporary documents in the Boston Public Library concerning his childhood, his escape to Boston, his arrest there, his subsequent trail, and finally his return to Virginia to his master. These helped to explain how some slaves managed to escape.

In the 1840's and 1850's, the large number of slaves in Virginia made it more profitable for slave owners to hire their slaves out than sell them. Burns was hired out from the age of seven, always on a one-year contract to different employers. As he grew older, he became responsible for getting his own annual work contracts and giving his wages to his master. This struck me as giving an incredible responsibility as well as freedom to a slave, but it gave Burns experience in job hunting, working for different employers and in different fields. Also his short-term contracts meant that nobody could identify him easily. His last employer couldn't pay the contracted annual fee to the master, so he and Burns negotiated a deal whereby Burns would look for day work and pay the employer every month. Burns found work unloading and loading boats in Richmond. In this way, his escape to Boston by boat was not noted until his next "pay" day, and he, with his considerable work experience, easily found employment in Boston. His subsequent recapture and extradition trial roused abolitionists to riot in Boston. When a few years later when he came to St. Catharines, he was already well known, although not yet thirty. He died two years later, in 1862, and was buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery in St. Catharines.

October Program Report

The Society's program for October was well attended, with 68 people coming to hear our Past President John Burtiak's presentation: Lundy's Lane and Gettysburg - a twist on history. John recounted the important and bloody battles of Gettysburg and Lundy's Lane in an overview fashion and then concentrated on the creation of an area to commemorate the fallen; in Gettysburg, a large battlefield and cemetery, in Lundy's Lane only a cemetery. John then spoke about the monuments that were constructed on each site to commemorate the battles. It was the dedication services that proved to be the "twist on history." John told us about the dedication plans at Gettysburg and speeches made. In particular, the address by President Lincoln, the entire historic two-minute speech, which John read. Moving on to the dedication of the impressive Lundy's Lane monument, John recounted the raising of funds and construction of the monument, and the plans to dedicate it. John suggested that The Historical Society of St. Catharines was invited by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society to actively participate in the day's proceedings. The program was thus recounted and several members of the audience found themselves undertaking various duties. As well, John asked us to imagine that President Lincoln had not been assassinated and was invited to represent the United States of America in commemorating all those soldiers from both countries who gave their lives in the Battle of Lundy's Lane. President Lincoln did attend and in a similar fashion as at Gettysburg, he delivered a "Gettysburg style" speech (of course one that John prepared!). It was a unique way of telling the story of such an important event in our history and I am sure all who attended found it to be a most unique twist!

Following the lecture, refreshments were enjoyed.

The Society thanks Ann Nakagawa, an accomplished painter, for her generous donation of a beautiful water colour of the Port Dalhousie lighthouse, towards the success of the evening.

Louth, Lincolnshire, England

Louth is known as the "capital of the Lincolnshire Wolds"; it is situated where the ancient track way Barton Street crosses the River Lud. The town sits on the Greenwich meridian, a small plaque in Eastgate marks the line where world time and longitude are measured from.

Much of the town centre is lined with brick buildings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The town's skyline is dominated by the spire of the Church of St. James, which is 295 feet tall (and can be climbed to the top), and is reputedly the tallest parish church in the UK. St James Church was built between 1420 and 1480 on the profits of the wool trade. The spire was completed around 1515. Louth once had a large Abbey, whose wealth was also based on wool; with flocks of over 6,000 sheep at one point. One of the Vicars of St James, Thomas Kendall was a leader in the Pilgrimage of Grace. This was an uprising in 1536 against the government of Henry VIII by people unhappy with the King's rejection of Roman Catholicism and the dissolution of the monasteries (including Louth's Cistercian Abbey, founded in 1139, whose ruins are still visible today). The uprising began in Lincolnshire in October and Lincoln was briefly occupied by the rebels. The King refused to hear their protests, and whilst pretending to meet some of their demands dispersed the protesters. The leaders, including Thomas Kendall were executed. A commemorative plaque in honour of the rebels can be found near St James. The church retains a fine interior (much of which was restored in the 19th century). One curiosity is the 'Sudbury Hutch', a medieval portable cupboard used for displaying plates.

Louth is a market town, although the traditional cattle market at the top of the town has now been outstripped by new industry in the large industrial estate at the bottom of the town. Other historic buildings include a number of coaching inns, as well as fine period houses in Westgate and Upgate, the refurbished 1854 Town Hall and the Market Hall, built in 1867. The Louth Museum contains information on the abbey and other archaeological sites in the area, the flood, natural history and more. To the east of town is the area known as Riverhead, where the 11-mile long canal was built in the 1770s, for the sum of £28,000. The canal became for a time a major conduit for trade through Louth adding to the wealth generated from the wool trade. Indeed the nearby inn is still called the Woolpack and was used for the storing of wool as well as the quenching of thirsts! Trade through the canal was brisk and there were regular sailings to London and Hull and other local ports. As well as wool and corn were exported, and coal and timber brought into the town. In 1920 the river and canal flooded, destroying large areas of the town and killing 23 people. The canal finally closed in 1924, after a period of decline following the opening of the railway through Louth (also since closed). Although the canal is no longer navigable, the towpaths have been restored and make a fine walk out of town. The 18th century wool warehouse at the head of the canal has been turned into a restaurant and public meeting spaces, and houses are an excellent display on the canal.

Lord Tennyson attended Louth Grammar School and published his first book there.

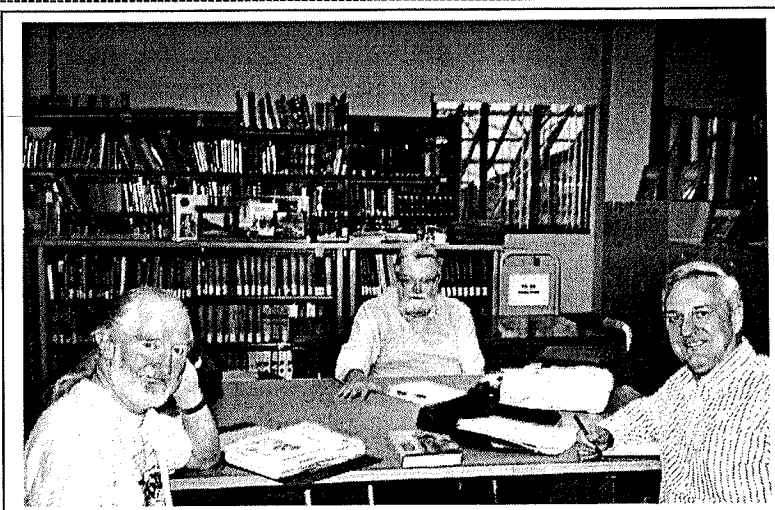
Louth's twin town is La Ferté-Bernard, close to Le Mans in Pays-de-la-Loire, France.

Today the town has its own "Food Trail" to sample local food.

Saturday at the Library

Each Saturday you will likely find one or more members of our Historical Society in the Special Collections Room at the St. Catharines Public Library undertaking various research projects. Pictured here (left to right) on this November 5th Saturday is Alun Hughes, Alex Ormston and Bill Stevens.

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Finnie.



Remembrance Day

On Friday, November 11, 2005 the Society placed a wreath at the Cenotaph during the Remembrance Day service. The wreath was laid by President Bill Stevens. There were many Society members in attendance, several who had experienced the war sixty and more years ago. It is right and fitting that those who made the supreme sacrifice be remembered, Lest we Forget!

Canadians who lost their lives in the wars are remembered on the Canadian Virtual War Memorial:

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=collections/virtualmem>

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission also maintains a web site to honour those who made the supreme sacrifice: www.cwgc.org

Historic Places in Niagara Summit

On Thursday, November 10 Society President Bill Stevens and Past President John Burtiniak attended an all-day heritage summit at the Beacon Motor Inn in the Town of Lincoln. The purpose of the summit was to explore the issues and opportunities surrounding historic places in Niagara and set a future direction for their preservation, presentation and marketing. The summit brought together approximately 100 citizens of Niagara who represented various heritage groups, museums, builders, churches, developers, and levels of government as well as authors, historians and a wide variety of other related and interested parties who have a passion for our historic places and their place in our past, present and future. Each individual was invited to host a workshop on a topic of their choosing and from this request approximately 40 workshops were held through 3 session times. Each attendee then participated by choosing 3 topics they were most interested in. Each session produced a results sheet from which Regional Niagara Planning Department staff will produce a consolidated report for Regional Council. This report will also be posted on the Niagara Region's website. Regional Council will then consider what role it should play in the implementation of the recommended actions.

Heritage ... Web Sites of Interest

Canada's Historic Places Initiative

The Government of Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments has developed the Historic Places Initiative, the first "coast to coast to coast" program designed to conserve Canada's historic places. Historic places capture the soul and spirit of our country. Historic places make our communities more interesting places to live. Our historic places inspire pride in what Canada represents. They are without a doubt, among our greatest national assets. We need to cherish and preserve them, for our benefit, and as a legacy to pass on to future generations of Canadians. To find out more, visit the web site www.historicplaces.ca

Strengthening Ontario's Heritage

In April 2005, we celebrated the passing of new legislation strengthening the Ontario Heritage Act. Our heritage protection laws have been updated for the 21st century and are now in line with leading jurisdictions in Canada and abroad. Strengthening Ontario's Heritage is designed for anyone who is interested in community heritage preservation. The ministry has produced an introductory guide to identifying, protecting and promoting the heritage of our communities. For more information visit the web site: www.culture.gov.on.ca

The Ontario Heritage Trust

Throughout Ontario, there is a growing pride in our heritage. Communities boast of their commercial buildings, courthouses, places of worship, gardens, natural heritage and other heritage sites. The Ontario Heritage Trust launched Doors Open Ontario in 2002 to create access, awareness and excitement about our Province's heritage. Further information about the Ontario Heritage Trust and its programs, visit the trust's website: www.heritagefdn.on.ca

City of St. Catharines Heritage Corridor

Our city has a rich and significant past. A recent addition to our downtown area is a Heritage Corridor. To see what the heritage corridor is all about, visit the web site: www.heritagecorridor.ca

Upcoming Events and Heritage Calendar

November 19 through January 22 – The St. Catharines Museum presents “Let’s Celebrate: Festivals of Music”. 905-984-8880 or www.stcatharineslock3museum.ca

December 25 – Christmas Day – the Board of Directors wishes the membership a warm and wonderful holiday season, a time to remember the past and ponder the future

January 11 – Sir John A. Macdonald Day

January 26 – The Historical Society of St. Catharines meeting and speaker program

February – Black History Month

February 4 – 11:45 a.m. at Betty’s Restaurant, (Chippawa) Niagara Falls – Andy Panko: “Niagara Gorge Railways”, presented by The Colonel John Butler (Niagara) Branch of the United Empire Loyalists’ Association of Canada. Guests are always welcome. A luncheon takes place prior to the lecture

February 11 through April 9 – The St. Catharines Museum presents “Iroquois Beadwork”, a travelling exhibit from the Royal Ontario Museum. This exhibit explores historical and contemporary beadwork, its symbolism and its relevance to modern-day life. 905-984-8880 or www.stcatharineslock3museum.ca

February 14 – anticipated opening of “Maplehurst,” the magnificent Keefer Mansion at 14 St. David’s Road West, Thorold

February 15 – National Flag Day of Canada

February 17 – 210 years since February 17, 1796 when the first document that mentions “the church at St. Catharines” is dated

February 20 – Heritage Day

February 23 - The Historical Society of St. Catharines meeting and speaker program

March 23 - The Historical Society of St. Catharines meeting and speaker program

April 27 - The Historical Society of St. Catharines meeting and speaker program

May – 210th anniversary of the death in May 1796 of Col. John Butler, leader of Butler’s Rangers during the American Revolutionary War

May 25 - The Historical Society of St. Catharines meeting and speaker program

June 10 – The Historical Society of St. Catharines - Oille Fountain Planting and Walking Tour

June 17 – The Historical Society of St. Catharines – annual bus tour

June 24 – 15th Annual Laura Secord Hike, exactly 193 years after Laura’s trip. Conducted by the Bruce Trail Association Niagara Bruce Trail Club

July 2 – The Historical Society of St. Catharines - Merritt Wreath Ceremony and walking tour

September 28 - The Historical Society of St. Catharines meeting and speaker program

October – Doors Open Niagara

2012 – Bicentennial of the War of 1812 ... what do you think the Historical Society should do to recognize this important part of our history?